

February 28, 2003

By Kelly Kramp, STAFF WRITER

DNC is latest to ask Coble to drop chairmanship

The Democratic National Committee has called on Rep. Howard Coble to resign from his position as chairman of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism and Homeland Security.

According to a statement released this week, the Democratic National Committee passed a resolution urging Coble, R-6th District, to resign the chairmanship he gained at the start of the 108th Congress.

"In our work to keep our country safe from terrorism, policy-makers have an obligation to balance the need to protect our homeland and safeguard the constitutional rights of all American citizens and residents," said Terry McAuliffe, Democratic National Committee chairman in the statement.

"Congressman Coble is not fit to lead our country on security and constitutional matters and must resign from the chairmanship," McAuliffe said.

A spokeswoman for Coble declined to comment Thursday and said she has not seen the resolution but has requested the document from the Democratic National Committee.

The Democratic National Committee resolution is in response to comments made by Coble during a Feb. 4. Greensboro radio program when he said he agreed with Franklin D. Roosevelt's decision to intern Japanese-Americans during World War II. The congressman also said some Arabs in the United States probably intend harm to America, just as some Japanese in the United States must have during World War II.

The remarks sparked criticism and protests from several groups including Japanese-American, Asian-American, Muslim and Arab-American groups. Criticism has also come from three Asian-American congressmen, Rep. Mike Honda, D-Calif., Rep. Robert Matsui, D-Calif., and Rep. David Wu, D-Ore.

The Republican National Committee could not be reached for comment Thursday, but Honda has urged GOP leaders to request that Coble resign from the chairmanship.

Other organizations, including an online Asian-American advocacy group, have circulated Internet, e-mail and fax petitions calling for Coble's resignation from the chairmanship.

Coble later apologized for offending anyone, saying Japanese-Americans were interned for their own safety and protection as well as for national security purposes. He also stated that he no longer agreed with the internment.

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